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RE-REVIEW

January 17, 1957

Dear Mr. King:

I refer to your memorandum of January 7, 1957 transmitting a letter addressed to the Vice President by the President of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. The latter has invited a United States Congressional delegation to attend a proposed conference in Strasbourg with a group of European parliamentarians selected from the Consultative Assembly to discuss (a) the present state of European integration, and (b) ways and means of improving relations between the American continent and free Europe for the purpose of safeguarding Western civilization. The suggested date for the conference is March 18-22, 1957.

The Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe is a deliberative body composed of delegates elected or appointed by the parliaments of the fourteen member countries of Europe. Most of the national parties (but not the Communist Party) are represented. Each member of the Consultative Assembly participates in the public debates and votes as an individual rather than a national representative. The United States is not a member nor does it have observer status in the Council of Europe, although of course the United States Government follows with interest the work of the Council.

The Department of State considers that the development of closer ties between members of the United States Congress and of European Parliaments is most desirable, in the belief that the exchange of views among legislative representatives of the Atlantic Community countries contributes to mutual understanding.

On only one other occasion since the organization of the Council of Europe in 1949 has the Consultative Assembly proposed a special conference to meet with representatives of the United States Congress. That invitation was accepted by the Congress (Senate Concurrent Resolution 36) and led to the so-called "first Strasbourg Conference" in November 1951 which was attended by seven members each from the Senate

and the House

Mr. Robert L. King,
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and the House of Representatives. The Department of State believes both the European and American participants regarded the first Strasbourg Conference as well worthwhile.

The suggested agenda for the second Strasbourg Conference would provide an opportunity for a United States Congressional delegation to learn first-hand of the significant progress toward European integration which has been made since the 1951 Conference as reflected in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community and current negotiations, apparently nearing completion, with regard to EURATOM and a European Common Market.

Acceptance of the invitation by the United States Congress would, in the view of this Department, constitute a further indication of continued American interest in European problems and would thus encourage the development of European efforts in the direction of strengthening their ties with the United States.

We recognize that the dates suggested by the President of the Consultative Assembly (March 18-22, 1957) may be difficult in terms of the Congressional legislative schedule. Should it be impossible to make available a representative delegation at that time, a more suitable alternative date might be proposed to the President of the Consultative Assembly.

The Department of State is prepared to assist you in any way with regard to any communication the Vice President may wish to address to the President of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The letter you enclosed is returned, a copy having been made for our files.

Sincerely yours,

Robert C. Hill
Assistant Secretary

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